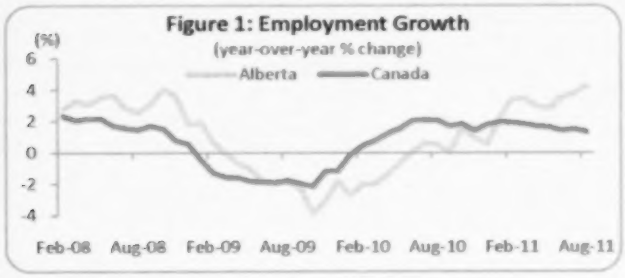
Labour Force

Employment growth continues...

Employment in Alberta was up for the fourth consecutive month, with the province gaining 6,600 jobs in August. Most of increase was in full-time jobs. Gains were led by public administration (5,700), finance, insurance, real estate and leasing (4,600) and business, building and other support services (4,400) while losses were recorded in natural resources (-12,200) and educational services (-4,800). Despite the increase, Alberta's unemployment rate rise to 5.6 per cent in August from 5.5 per cent in July as more people joined the labor force.

On the other hand, Canadian employment decreased by 5,500 in August. The national unemployment rate edged up to 7.3 per cent in August. Amongst the growth leaders were Alberta (6,600), Nova Scotia (4,100) and New Brunswick (2,200) while losses were recorded in British Columbia (-6,000), Quebec (-4,500), Newfoundland and Labrador (-3,400) and Ontario (-2,800).

Figure 1: Employment Growth



Housing Starts

Alberta housing starts soar...

Alberta's housing starts were up 19.8% in August to 29,100 units (seasonally adjusted at annual rates) – the largest monthly increase since March 2010 and the highest growth in the country. Year-to-date, housing starts declined 17.3% and averaged 23,400 units. Nationally, annualized housing starts in August were down 9.7% to 184,700 units and decreased 2.9% year-over-year.

New House Price Index

Alberta house prices edge down...

The Alberta new house price index was down 0.2% in July and grew at a mere 0.1% year-over-year. New house prices in Calgary fell 0.8% year-over-year, while prices in Edmonton grew 1.1%.

Building Permits

Value of building permits rises ...

The total value of building permits in Alberta was up 10.9% in July (seasonally adjusted) to $1.1 billion. This increase was due to growth in residential (13.3%) and non-residential building permits (7.9%). On a year-over-year basis, the value of building permits increased 17.7% and advanced 0.3% year-to-date. Nationally, the value of building permits advanced 6.3% to $7 billion in July.

Canadian Dollar (US¢/C$)	
September 9, 2011	100.29
September 2, 2011	101.88
2011-12 YTD	103.15
WTI Oil US$/bbl	
September 9, 2011	$87.24
September 2, 2011	$86.45
2011-12 YTD	$97.39
Nymex Natural Gas US$/MMBtu*	
Near-month Contract	
September 9, 2011	$3.92
September 2, 2011	$3.87

**Estimate based on Nymex Futures Market Price*

Insolvency Statistics

Bankruptcies increase ...

Total bankruptcies in Alberta increased 4.1% to 665 in June, as a 27.3% decrease in business bankruptcies was more than offset by a 5.2% increase in consumer bankruptcies. Despite the increase in June, on a year-over-year basis, total bankruptcies declined 17%.

Merchandise Trade

Alberta exports advance...

The value of Alberta's international exports rose 0.8% in July to $7.9 billion, the third consecutive monthly increase. This was mainly due to increases in agricultural and fishing products (2.5%) and energy products (2.0%). Decreases were recorded in other consumer goods (-34.5%) and machinery and equipment (-13.8%).

Canada's trade deficit improves...

Canada's trade deficit declined to $753 million in July from $1.4 billion in June. Merchandise exports rose 2.2% to $37.3 billion and imports were up 0.5% to $38.0 billion. This improvement in trade bodes well for Canadian GDP in July and it is bright spot for the Canadian economy after negative second quarter growth.

Bank Of Canada Interest Rate Decision

BoC maintains overnight rate target ...

The Bank of Canada maintained the overnight rate target at 1% and indicated its intention to keep rate unchanged due to slowing global economic momentum and heightened financial uncertainty.

Other Developments

President Obama outlined a $447 billion job action plan to Congress; however, it remains to be approved. Nonetheless, financial markets and oil prices fell amid returned jitters over sovereign debt woes.

Current Economic Indicators

	2009	2010	2011YTD*	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug
Population									
Population [1] (000's) (level)	3,671	3,721	3,758	--	3,758	--	--	--	--
% change	2.2	1.4	1.5	--	1.5	--	--	--	--
Net Interprovincial Migraton [1] (level)	13,184	-2,183	8,940	--	5,275	--	--	--	--
Net International Migration [1] (level)	16,835	21,533	15,143	--	4,149	--	--	--	--
Net Non-permanent Residents [1] (level)	19,162	-77	-8,872	--	-504	--	--	--	--
Labour Market									
Employment (000's)	2,025	2,017	2,077	2,064	2,060	2,069	2,091	2,103	2,110
% change	-1.3	-0.4	3.3	3.4	2.9	2.8	3.5	3.8	4.2
Unemployment Rate (%)	6.6	6.5	5.7	5.7	5.9	5.4	5.6	5.5	5.6
Participation Rate (%)	74.3	72.9	73.5	73.2	73.2	72.9	73.7	73.9	74.1
Average Weekly Earnings ($)	950.01	993.13	1032.90	1031.15	1032.26	1035.77	1041.45	--	--
% change	2.8	4.5	5.2	5.3	3.3	4.8	5.0	--	--
Price Indices									
Consumer Price Index	-0.1	1.0	2.0	2.0	3.0	2.8	2.1	1.9	--
Excluding food and energy	1.4	0.8	0.6	1.1	0.4	0.8	0.2	0.4	--
Non-Res. Building Cons. Price Index [2]	-9.8	-0.1	3.1	--	2.6	--	--	--	--
Farm Product Price Index	-10.6	-3.9	17.2	19.3	17.0	11.4	--	--	--
Crops	-18.9	-14.5	17.2	18.0	19.4	19.8	--	--	--
Livestock	-2.8	5.7	18.4	20.0	16.1	10.6	--	--	--
Household Sector									
Housing Starts (SAAR, 000's)	20.0	27.1	23.4	20.9	22.3	25.3	23.6	24.3	29.1
% change	-31.6	33.5	-17.3	-39.4	-24.1	-14.5	-11.9	-17.1	23.8
New Housing Price Index	-9.0	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.1	0.3	0.3	0.1	--
Edmonton	-11.2	-0.8	0.9	1.2	0.4	0.7	1.2	1.1	--
Calgary	-6.7	1.7	0.0	-0.1	-0.2	0.0	-0.3	-0.8	--
MLS Average Resale Prices ($ 000's)	340.5	350.9	353.5	348.8	360.1	351.7	351.7	353.6	--
% change	-3.1	3.1	0.0	-1.9	0.6	-2.4	-1.3	0.4	
Edmonton	319.1	326.5	323.4	320.2	326.4	322.7	322.6	326.8	--
% change	-3.5	2.3	-2.0	-4.6	-4.2	-3.0	-1.8	0.2	--
Calgary	384.3	397.4	400.6	393.4	404.4	403.7	399.3	397.9	--
% change	-4.2	3.4	0.4	-0.8	2.2	-1.3	-2.3	-1.2	--
Retail Sales	-8.3	6.0	6.0	4.3	7.5	7.9	7.4	--	--
New Motor Vehicle Sales	-21.7	9.3	8.6	11.4	8.9	7.0	17.1	--	--
Consumer Bankruptcies	9,986	8,150	3,800	680	640	617	649	--	--
% change	64.6	-18.4	-11.4	-12.4	-14.0	-8.2	-16.6	--	
Business Sector									
Rigs Drilling	128	207	259	366	123	84	150	240	323
% change	-45.6	61.3	40.0	66.6	100.4	50.4	26.9	20.8	45.2
Goods Exports (customs based)	-36.6	12.4	14.0	18.5	9.1	13.2	17.0	19.4	--
Energy	-40.2	17.2	15.5	21.6	6.5	15.8	17.8	23.5	--
Agriculture	-12.3	-14.4	4.5	-3.4	11.6	3.7	-0.3	8.4	--
Total Farm Cash Receipts (quarterly)	-8.0	-3.9	15.9	--	-11.1	--	--	--	--
Manufacturing Shipments	-23.7	11.0	16.1	16.7	19.5	15.5	15.5	--	--
Wholesale Trade	-15.9	10.8	14.5	13.3	9.7	17.0	18.6	--	--
Building Permits	-14.2	2.1	0.3	-12.6	-22.3	11.7	-14.9	17.7	--
Residential	-11.8	24.7	-10.0	-4.5	0.2	-10.2	-3.6	9.3	--
Non-residential	-16.3	-19.0	15.9	-24.4	-49.0	51.9	-26.1	31.6	--
Business Bankruptcies	405	378	117	26	17	22	16	--	--
% change	-9.4	-6.7	33.9	-45.8	-54.1	-37.1	-27.3	--	--

Government of Alberta
Finance and Enterprise

Alberta

* YTD – year-to-date represents the change since the beginning of the year compared to the same period in the previous year.

1 Quarterly; annual numbers are presented on a census year basis (July 1 - June 30).

2 Quarterly, average of Calgary and Edmonton

Sources: All data is from Statistics Canada except Housing Starts (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation), MLS Average Resale Prices (Canadian Real Estate Association), Rigs Drilling (Canadian Association of Oilwell Drilling Contractors) and Bankruptcies (Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy Canada).

Current Economic Indicators by Province